

FAMILIES OUTSIDE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2013 – 2016

The imprisonment of a relative has an impact on the social, emotional, financial and, especially for children and young people, educational development of the remaining family members.

Families Outside is the only national organisation which works exclusively on behalf of families affected by imprisonment in Scotland.

Families Outside is recognised as a national Scottish charity by the Inland Revenue and is constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

Imprisonment is a traumatic experience for families, and its impact is often significant and enduring. Families Outside works to mitigate the effects of imprisonment on children and families - and consequently to reduce the likelihood of reoffending - through support and information for families and for the people who work with them.

2. CORE VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND BELIEFS

- Families Outside is committed to equality and diversity.
- Family members should not be judged or discriminated against because a member of their family has been imprisoned.
- The responsibility for ensuring that families are not disadvantaged due to imprisonment of a family member lies with agencies in the social justice, inclusion, education, health, and care systems as well as with agencies in the criminal justice system. We will therefore develop and promote partnerships with other organisations in order to achieve our goals. Where competition for funding is unavoidable, we will maintain open and honest dialogue with the other parties in order to maintain positive partnership relationships.
- The needs of families affected by imprisonment in Scotland should be researched, acknowledged, and reflected in public policy and sustainable, accessible, and empowering services made available to meet these needs.
- Where appropriate to the families' needs, relationships with their relative in prison should be actively supported and maintained and recognised as a significant contribution to reducing reoffending. Children separated from a parent due to imprisonment have the right to maintain their relationship with an imprisoned parent (as determined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- Our effectiveness will be measured by outcomes for individual families (eg. through the Helpline and support workers) and in our impact on the responses of other agencies to families affected by imprisonment (eg. through influencing policy and practice, through partnership work and support of other organisations that work with families).
- We are committed to developing and maintaining high standards of financial and management practice in order to ensure efficiency and accountability to our members and funders.

3. BRIEF HISTORY

The Scottish Forum on Prisons and Families was established in 1991 by professionals in criminal justice and childcare organisations who recognised that the needs of families affected by imprisonment were overlooked by all parts of the system. Initially hosted by Save the Children, the Forum initiated research into the impact of imprisonment on family members which led to SPS establishing the role of Family Contact Development Officer within prisons. SPS also provided continued support through chairmanship of the Forum, the secondment of an officer to the Forum as the base from which to develop the FCDO role, and a financial contribution to the Scottish Prisoners' Families Information Line, set up in 1998, which provides a national confidential freephone service.

During 2001/02 the Management Committee of the Forum reviewed the progress of the organisation and subsequently implemented a change of name (to Families Outside) and constitutional status, appointed a Board of Directors with an independent chairman, and recruited a full time Director who joined the organisation in January 2003. The organisation has continued to grow ever since, taking an active role in the development of policy and practice nationally and in supporting locally-based family services. In October 2008, Families Outside entered into direct service provision for the first time through the recruitment of full-time family support workers.

In 2009/10, the Board restructured its Constitution, streamlining membership of the Board to create a smaller, more strategic group. Significant amongst these changes was that Board members would now be selected for the expertise they could contribute rather than automatically including people from particular organisations.

4. CURRENT CHALLENGES

A number of developments that have an impact on the work of Families Outside have taken place since publication of the previous Strategic Plan. These include the following:

Consultation on the future structure of Community Justice: The division of Scottish Community Justice into eight Community Justice Authorities (CJAs) is under review following a recommendation for this in the Report of the Angiolini Commission (2012). The new structures proposed are for an Enhanced CJA Model; a fully localised system under the control of the 32 local authorities; or a unified Single Service model. Current arrangements will remain in place until 2016, but the outcome of the Consultation will have significant implications for how we deliver our service.

Single Outcome Agreements: Scottish local authorities have autonomy for their own governance as long as they work towards agreed national outcomes. This means that they have responsibility for allocation of funding. While some central government funding remains ring-fenced (eg. Criminal Justice Social Work), non-statutory services increasingly have to apply directly to each of the 32 local councils to secure funding for their work. The increasing preference from the Scottish Government for Public Social Partnerships is beginning to mitigate against this challenge, though this model of delivery is largely untested in Scotland over longer periods.

Increasing prison population: Despite decreasing crime rates, the average daily population in and receptions to Scottish Prisons remain at a high level (8,178 ADP and 37,002 receptions in 2011-12, with the prison population over 8,300 people for much of 2011-12). Meanwhile, Scottish courts are imposing the highest number of prison sentences in ten years. Prisons throughout Scotland are under considerable pressure from overcrowding, and prisons have to prioritise core programmes over other areas. Meanwhile the 2011 Scottish Prisoner Survey indicated that 7,600 children in Scotland have a parent in prison each day, with a subsequent estimate that 27,000 children in Scotland experience a parent's imprisonment each year. This means that twice as many children in Scotland each year are affected by a parent's imprisonment than by a parent's divorce.

Financial hardship and welfare reform: At a time when the client group for Families Outside is increasing, the continuing global financial crisis means that funding for our work, especially over the longer term, is increasingly uncertain. Meanwhile, many of the families we support are facing reductions in income due to changes in the social welfare system. Families Outside has the benefit of working towards preventative policies over both the short and long term, which is appealing to funders in times of financial hardship. The reality, however, is that many voluntary organisations and businesses are losing their funding, and both Government and Trust funds have less and less money to distribute.

5. KEY OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS 2013 - 2016

Based on this context, vision, and core values, the Key Objectives for Families Outside for 2013 – 2016 are as follows:

- **Families affected by imprisonment can readily access appropriate information and support at the time they need it. This in turn will improve their experience with the criminal justice system and mitigate its impact on them.**
- **Policy makers, decision makers, and relevant service providers will be well-informed about the issues facing families affected by imprisonment. They will recognise prisoners' families within their remit and take the needs of these families into account in the decisions they make and the services they provide.**
- **Families Outside will provide a sustainable and viable service as long as the demand for its work is evident.**

In order to achieve these objectives, our targets include the following actions:

- **Raise awareness and influence policy and practice regarding families affected by imprisonment;**
- **Provide and increase direct support and information to families;**
- **Support and collaborate with other organisations to support families; and**
- **Ensure viability, effectiveness and impact of the organisation.**

These aims are essential and ongoing. Methods of and progress towards achieving these aims are detailed in the Families Outside Business Plan and will be updated annually.